

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03) issued the following statement in response to the House passage H.R. 2231, the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act, and H.R. 1613, the Outer Continental Shelf Transboundary Hydrocarbon Agreements Authorization Act:

"After the BP oil spill disaster in the Gulf Coast in 2010, there is simply too much at risk for Congress to mandate offshore oil exploration and drilling in the Atlantic. The effect that a similar catastrophe would have on Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay would be economically devastating, likely causing significant harm to tourism, recreational spending, and the seafood industry.

"When considering the benefits of this legislation we must also consider the effect that additional oil drilling will have on gasoline prices. Unfortunately, as oil is sold on a world market, expanded drilling off the Atlantic coast will have a negligible effect on prices at the pump.

"Additionally, H.R. 1613, and H.R. 2231, respectively, include significant exemptions from the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. Language included in H.R. 1613 would allow large, public, oil corporations to make payments to foreign governments without disclosing these payments to shareholders or the American public. Meanwhile, H.R. 2231 would allow the Department of Interior to issue a blanket environmental impact statement for the entire Atlantic coast, not taking in to account the geological differences in the proposed lease areas.

"In light of the BP disaster and other oil spills, Congress, instead of looking to open up new areas for offshore drilling, should work to strengthen safety requirements for offshore drilling, invest in renewable energy sources (such as offshore wind which could create 80,000 jobs in Virginia by 2020), and conserve Virginia's coastline for future generations."

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